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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 10, 2007

#### In Today's Papers

##### Koksal Toptan Elected Parliament Speaker

All papers report Koksal Toptan has been elected Parliament Speaker in the first round of voting with the backing of 450 MPs. Nationalist MHP's candidate Tunca Toskay received 74 votes. Toptan, a moderate conservative, does not have an Islamist past and his wife does not wear the Muslim headscarf. President Sezer and all party leaders praised Toptan, welcoming his election as speaker. Following his election, Toptan said, "I am a deputy of the AKP, but now I consider all parties and all deputies as my own. My goal is not to disappoint those who have faith in me."

##### Debate over the Presidency Continues

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Vatan, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others continue speculation on the uncertainty surrounding who Turkey's next president will be. CHP leader Deniz Baykal said Thursday he hoped the compromise displayed in the parliament speaker election would also be seen in the presidential election. Baykal said if the presidency is given to a "suitable" candidate, it would "ease pressure on the economy, lead to softening in domestic politics and strengthen Turkey in foreign policy issues." Following the election of the new parliament speaker, Prime Minister Erdogan held a meeting with former parliament speaker Bulent Arinc and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul. Erdogan said after the meeting, "Democracy does not allow us to ignore the will of the nation. We are expected to move in line with the preferences of voters." Mainstream Vatan says Erdogan's remarks are interpreted by some as support for Gul's candidacy and by others as an indication that he wants a compromise candidate. Islamist-oriented Zaman thinks moderate politician Koksal Toptan's election as parliament speaker is another factor strengthening Gul's chances for becoming president. Papers expect Erdogan to meet with opposition leaders to seek consensus in the presidential election. Papers speculate the presidential voting will take place in the end of August, with the first round on August 23 and the second and the third rounds on August 26 and 29.

Iraqi Kurdish MP Opposes Turkey-Iraq MOU on Terror  
Sabah, Milliyet, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report  
Mahmoud Osman, a Kurdish member of the Iraqi parliament, told Voice  
of Iraq Radio the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between  
Iraq and Turkey did not represent the views of the regional Kurdish  
administration. Osman also said the PKK was not a terrorist  
organization, but was actually fighting against the "terrorism of  
the Turkish government."

Meanwhile, Cumhuriyet reports the Turkish General Staff (TGS) has  
rejected a regional Kurdish administration request, conveyed by the  
Maliki delegation in talks in Ankara earlier this week, to open a  
new border crossing between Turkey and Iraq near the Habur Gate. The  
TGS reportedly rejected the request because of concerns that it  
would provide another source of money for Massoud Barzani.

Editorial Commentary on Maliki's Turkey Visit  
Feraî Tinc writes in the mainstream daily Hurriyet: "It is almost a  
given that Maliki will not be able keep the promises he made in  
Ankara. Moreover it is not even certain that he will be able to  
keep his Prime Minister seat once the Iraqi parliament reconvenes.  
Given the fact that the same Iraqi Kurds support both Maliki and PKK  
activities in the area, we cannot expect anything concrete on the  
PKK. Energy cooperation between Iraq and Turkey, part of the  
discussions in Ankara, becomes the most important tool for future  
bilateral relations. The Regional Parliament of Iraqi Kurdistan has  
approved the oil law which paves the way for the Kurdistan  
administration to gain control over energy resources. Turkey is the  
easiest route for foreign firms regarding exploration and  
distribution of Iraqi oil. Turkey should use this fact as  
efficiently as possible to push Iraqi Kurds to take steps toward  
regional stability and security. Otherwise, we will have to fool

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ourselves with never-ending promises or unrealized memoranda of  
understanding."

Haluk Ulman writes in the business and political daily Dunya:  
"Turkey tried to create a mechanism against the PKK with Maliki  
although he desperately is in need of Barzani. Despite all the  
efforts prior to the Maliki visit with regard to creating a joint  
action plan against the PKK, the meeting ended with no results as  
the MOU is just a cosmetic document. The wording of the MOU is not  
strong enough to placate Ankara because there is nothing concrete  
besides the ambiguous rhetoric that 'every effort will be exerted on  
the PKK.' That details are to be worked out by commissions means  
nothing. In short, Maliki cannot make a promise to fight jointly  
against the PKK. Barzani, as his sole supporter, would not let him  
go ahead with an action plan against PKK. Washington does not want  
a cross-border operation either -- the recent Washington Post  
article [by Novak] was obviously a creative story to prevent a  
possible Turkish military action in the north of Iraq. Now the real  
question is why the Turkish government is putting all the effort  
into such meetings with no obvious results, if this is not only a  
public relations effort."

Kurdish DTP Continues Peace Messages  
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others  
report Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP leader Ahmet Turk reiterated  
the party's commitment to peace, by saying "We have extended a hand  
in peace, and we don't have a gun in the other hand. We have always  
advocated dialogue, and we are honest in our calls that we are ready  
for sacrifices for peace and democracy." Nationalist MHP leader  
Devlet Bahçeli had said earlier this week the MHP would not turn  
down any hand reaching out, but would never allow "the other hand to  
be shooting at Turkish soldiers."

Turkey-Greek Cyprus Oil Exploration Dispute  
All papers report Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) Spokesman Levent  
Bilman told a press briefing yesterday Turkey's views on the Greek  
Cypriot administration's efforts to license offshore oil and natural  
gas exploration on the seabed around Cyprus is a contravention of  
the international law, had been conveyed to all international  
organizations, including the UN. Bilman stressed it was imperative  
that a lasting solution be reached which would let the Turkish and  
Greek Cypriots jointly utilize resources of the island.

#### Water Crisis in Ankara

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman, Yeni Safak and others. Ankara, the Turkish capital city of four million, is enduring severe water shortages because of a drought. Papers say people are helpless over the water crisis -- operations are being delayed in hospitals and doctors are warning of epidemic outbreaks. Foreign embassies are struggling to cope with the water crisis, reports Cumhuriyet, and quote foreign diplomats' amazement that water is scarce in cities in a country surrounded by seas on three sides. Radikal says Ankara Mayor Melih Gokcek has ignored countless proposals from authorities to secure the capital city's water supplies over the years. Papers also report Turkey's religious affairs directorate Diyanet will arrange prayers for rain in Ankara mosques on Friday.

#### TV Highlights

NTV, 7.00 A.M.

#### Domestic News

- About 11,500 Turkish Airlines' (THY) staff voted Thursday in favor of striking for more pay. Now the union can declare a strike, but must do so six days in advance of the strike beginning. In addition, the government can postpone strikes at strategic companies, including THY, for 60 days. The government had earlier warned of the negative consequences of a strike at the peak of the tourist season; and workers could face the danger of being laid off.

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- Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) Spokesman Levent Bilman said two draft resolutions introduced in the US Congress were "routine" Greek lobbying efforts, and that they are not expected to pass. The resolutions call for Turkish troops' to withdraw from the divided island. Bilman said Turkey keeps troops in Cyprus according to its legitimate rights stemming from international treaties.

- Turkey's banking board, BDDK, has vetoed the bid of Greek Alphabank to acquire a 50 percent stake of Turkish Abank. Reportedly, it has been discovered that the PKK has accounts in Alphabank's southern Cyprus branches.

- On August 15, collective bargaining talks on civil service pay hikes will be kicked off between the government and labor unions.

#### International News

- Iran yesterday announced full support of visiting Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and said US troops must leave Iraq immediately.

- Georgia has called for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council to condemn a missile attack by Russian jetfighters on Georgian territory.

- Christian Democrats in the Netherlands are searching for ways to close down mosques in which they believe radical imams preach hate.

- A group of Muslim protesters in India attacked Teslime Nesrin, the exiled Bangladeshi author and feminist, at a book launch in Haydarabad.

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